

SUBMITTED 25% DESIGN DRAWINGS TO MASS HIGHWAY FOR THEIR REVIEW AND APPROVAL, SECURING \$1.3 MILLION THROUGH THE FEDERAL ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM. OVER THE NEXT YEAR, WE WILL BEGIN CONSTRUCTION OF THE 6.5 MILE BIKE PATH WHICH TRAVELS EAST TO WEST AND WILL PROVIDE OUR CITIZENS WITH AN EXCITING RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITY. WE ARE CURRENTLY NEGOTIATING FOR THE PURCHASE OF LAND FOR THE BIKE PATH IN WEST PEABODY. ADDITIONALLY, WE ARE NEGOTIATING FOR THE PURCHASE OF 25 ACRES OF LAND IN SOUTH PEABODY FOR PERMANENT CONSERVATION PURPOSES. WE WILL BE COMING BEFORE YOUR HONORABLE BODY WITH RECOMMENDATIONS ONCE NEGOTIATIONS ARE COMPLETE.

OUR FIVE YEAR OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN OUTLINES A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENTS TO NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS. I WILL BE SUBMITTING A REQUEST FOR \$500,000 TO FUND ADDITIONAL PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT AND PARK IMPROVEMENTS.

WE HAVE HIRED A LAKE MANAGEMENT FIRM TO PREPARE THE PERMIT APPLICATION TO THE STATE AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENT FOR THE DREDGING OF CRYSTAL LAKE. WE WILL BE WORKING THIS YEAR TO FINALIZE PLANS AND TRANSFORMING CRYSTAL LAKE INTO A FIRST CLASS WATER-BASED RECREATION FACILITY.

IN 2000, WE WILL BE COMPLETING THE DESIGN FOR THE RIVERWALK, AND BEGINNING CONSTRUCTION, USING THE \$350,000 FROM STOP AND SHOP THAT WAS CONTRIBUTED AS PART OF THEIR MITIGATION FOR THE HOWLEY STREET SUPERMARKET. THE RIVERWALK IS A ONE-MILE LINEAR PARK ALONG THE DOWNTOWN NORTH RIVER CANAL. THREE PORTIONS OF THE RIVERWALK HAVE ALREADY BEEN CONSTRUCTED - THE LEATHER CITY COMMON, THE RENOVATION OF THE FOSTER STREET PARKING LOT ALONGSIDE THE RIVER, THE GOLDTHWAITE BROOK CROSSING BETWEEN FOSTER STREET AND CHURCH STREET.

OVER THE NEXT 2 YEARS, WE WILL BEGIN IMPLEMENTATION OF OUR RECENTLY COMPLETED TRANSPORTATION 2020 PLAN. THIS PLAN ASSESSES CONGESTION AND SAFETY ISSUES THROUGHOUT THE CITY, AND MAKES RECOMMENDATIONS AND IDENTIFIES FUNDING SOURCES FOR THESE IMPROVEMENTS.

IN ORDER TO KEEP OUR DOWNTOWN AND SURROUNDING AREAS VIABLE, WE WILL CONTINUE TO MOVE FORWARD WITH OUR COMPREHENSIVE DOWNTOWN 2005 ACTION PLAN, WHICH HAS ALREADY MET WITH SEVERAL SUCCESSES.

PEABODY HAS ALWAYS TAKEN GREAT PRIDE IN PROVIDING QUALITY SERVICES TO ITS SENIOR CITIZENS. OUR COMMUNITY LIFE CENTER HAS BEEN REFERRED TO AS THE CROWN JEWEL OF SENIOR

CENTERS IN MASSACHUSETTS. IN OUR ONGOING EFFORTS, WE HAVE COMPLETED DESIGN FOR A \$250,000 EXPANSION WHICH PROVIDES ADDITIONAL ADULT DAY CARE SPACE AS WELL AS AN EXPANDED RETAIL AREA AND NEW CAFÉ. CONSTRUCTION WILL BEGIN IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

THE PAST 2 YEARS, \$1.1 MILLION HAS BEEN SPENT ON IMPROVING LIBRARY BUILDINGS, A NEW PARKING LOT AND THE EXPANSION OF THE SOUTH BRANCH LIBRARY. IN OUR ON-GOING EFFORT TO MAKE OUR LIBRARIES THE BEST IN THE AREA, I WILL BE REQUESTING AN ADDITIONAL \$100,000 ABOVE WHAT HAS BEEN APPROPRIATED, TO EXPAND OUR VOLUME OF BOOKS AND RESEARCH MATERIALS.

THIS YEAR, WE WILL BE CONTRACTING FOR A NEW 10 YEAR MASTER PLAN, WHICH WILL PROVIDE US WITH A ROAD MAP FOR THE FUTURE, A NECESSARY VEHICLE FOR STATE AND FEDERAL GRANTS. I HAVE PERSONALLY BEEN INVOLVED WITH THE 1970, 1980 AND 1990 MASTER PLANS AND CANNOT EMPHASIZE ENOUGH THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS DOCUMENT.

OVER THE NEXT 2 YEARS, I WILL CONTINUE TO WORK WITH THE Y.M.C.A. IN THEIR EFFORT TO LOCATE A NEW FACILITY IN PEABODY, WHICH WOULD BE A WELCOMED ADDITION AND PROVIDE MANY OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE OF ALL AGES.

WHILE OUR ECONOMY IS STILL STRONG, WE MUST SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITY FOR RESPONSIBLE ECONOMIC GROWTH. TO THAT END, WE WILL CONTINUE TO USE OUR REVOLVING LOAN FUND WHICH HAS LEVERAGED OVER THE LAST SEVERAL YEARS NEARLY \$70 MILLION IN PRIVATE INVESTMENT, AND CREATED 819 JOBS WHILE RETAINING 388 JOBS, ATTRIBUTING TO THE 2.4% UNEMPLOYMENT RATE IN THE CITY OF PEABODY.

WE HAVE, THIS PAST YEAR, COMPLETED THE FINAL PHASE OF INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS ON JUBILEE DRIVE. THIS HAS PROVIDED FOR UTILITIES TO THE NEW MAINSTAY SUITES HOTEL, AS WELL AS THE 3 REMAINING UNDEVELOPED PROPERTIES AT THE EASTERLY END OF JUBILEE DRIVE. THESE IMPROVEMENTS PROVIDE THE POTENTIAL FOR AN ADDITIONAL 190,000 SQUARE FEET OF OFFICE AND INDUSTRIAL USE.

THIS PAST YEAR, WE CUT THE RIBBON FOR 3 NEW HOTELS. TWO ADDITIONAL HOTELS HAVE BEEN FULLY PERMITTED AND CONSTRUCTION IS EXPECTED TO START SHORTLY. WE WILL CLOSELY MONITOR THESE PROJECTS, AS WELL AS MANY OTHERS, INCLUDING ADDITIONS AT CENTENNIAL PARK, BROOKSBY VILLAGE AND AT LAKELAND PARK.

I AM PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE THAT I WAS RECENTLY ELECTED TO THE METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION FOR A SECOND TWO-YEAR TERM, WHICH ALLOWS US TO WORK WITH THE OTHER SIX ELECTED OFFICIALS FROM EASTERN MASSACHUSETTS, TO ALLOCATE \$40 MILLION EACH YEAR IN TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS FOR THE 101 CITIES AND TOWNS IN THE METROPOLITAN AREA PLANNING COUNCIL REGION.

ALSO, NEXT YEAR, I WILL BE SERVING AS CHAIRMAN OF THE M.B.T.A. ADVISORY BOARD, WHICH OVERSEES A \$900 MILLION BUDGET. I WILL ALSO BE WORKING WITH THE OTHER 174 COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO IMPROVE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION IN THE M.B.T.A. DISTRICT.

AS WE LOOK AHEAD, WE MUST BEGIN TO WORK TOGETHER WITH OTHER COMMUNITIES TO FIND EFFECTIVE WAYS TO REGIONALIZE OUR SERVICES AND TO FIND SOLUTIONS TO OUR COMMON PROBLEMS. DUPLICATION OF EFFORT AND EXPENDITURES WHERE UNNECESSARY IS AN UNFAIR BURDEN TO ASK OUR CITIZENS TO CARRY. PEABODY, IN CONJUNCTION WITH SALEM STATE COLLEGE, IS WORKING WITH THE NORTH OF BOSTON REGIONAL CENTER TO FIND REGIONAL SOLUTIONS.

THERE ARE MANY OTHER AREAS THAT WE WILL BE ADDRESSING OVER THE NEXT TWO YEARS IN OUR DAY TO DAY OPERATIONS IN PUBLIC SERVICE, PUBLIC SAFETY, HUMAN SERVICES, COMMUNITY PROGRAMS,

AND MANY MORE. WE HAVE A FULL PLATE WITH MUCH WORK TO DO AND MANY CHALLENGES, BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY WITH GREAT OPPORTUNITIES. LET US WORK TOGETHER TO BRING TO FRUITION ALL THAT IS AVAILABLE TO US. THOUGH IT WILL TAKE A MAJOR EFFORT ON MY PART, I FEEL THE SAME AS OUR EIGHTH MAYOR, PHILIP O'DONNELL, MUST HAVE FELT WHEN HE STATED IN HIS CLOSING REMARKS ON JANUARY 4, 1960, AND I QUOTE, "I WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT I AM NEITHER TIRED NOR FATIGUED. EACH INAUGURAL, EACH MID-TERM INAUGURAL, EACH ELECTION – INVIGORATES ME, RENEWS MY INTEREST, REVIVES MY STRENGTH, AND EXCITES THE PROSPECT OF A CONTINUANCE OF THE WORK NECESSARY TO BUILD A COMMUNITY IN WHICH THE FINEST OF AMERICANS CAN BE BORN, LIVE, WORK AND BRING UP THEIR FAMILIES."

YOU HAVE HONORED ME BY ALLOWING ME TO SERVE LONGER THAN ANY OTHER MAYOR IN THE HISTORY OF THE CITY, AND CURRENTLY THE LONGEST SERVING IN MASSACHUSETTS. I OWE YOU, THE CITIZENS OF PEABODY, A SINCERE DEBT OF GRATITUDE. I WILL DO EVERYTHING HUMANLY POSSIBLE TO FULFILL THE CONFIDENCE YOU HAVE PLACED IN ME.

AS WE START OUR JOURNEY INTO THE 21ST CENTURY, MY NUMBER ONE GOAL IS TO CONTINUE TO BUILD COMMUNITY IN THE TRUE SENSE OF

THE WORD. IN ORDER FOR US TO BE SUCCESSFUL, IT WILL TAKE STRONG LEADERSHIP. FROM TIME TO TIME, LEADERSHIP CAN BE A LONELY PLACE, WHEN DIFFICULT AND UNPOPULAR DECISIONS HAVE TO BE MADE. LEADERSHIP, AS I DEFINE IT, DOES NOT MEAN BEING ALL THINGS TO ALL PEOPLE. IT DOES NOT MEAN THAT ONLY THE MOST VOCAL ARE HEARD. WE SHOULD NOT SAY NO TO SOLUTIONS WITHOUT OFFERING ALTERNATIVES. WE SHOULD NOT LOSE SIGHT OF THE FACT THAT WE REPRESENT NEARLY 50,000 PEOPLE AND WE ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL THEIR INTERESTS. WE SHOULD NOT ALLOW PERSONAL FEELINGS TO CLOUD SOUND JUDGEMENT. LEADERSHIP REQUIRES MAKING DECISIONS IN THE BEST INTEREST OF ALL OUR PEOPLE, REGARDLESS OF HOW DIFFICULT AND UNPOPULAR THEY MAY BE. I WANT TO ASSURE YOU THAT I WILL NOT BE DETERRED FROM DOING WHAT I BELIEVE IS RIGHT AND IS IN THE BEST INTEREST OF OUR CITIZENS. I WILL NOT COMPROMISE MY PRINCIPALS FOR POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS. WHETHER GATHERED IN THIS GREAT AUDITORIUM THERE IS 1 PERSON OR 1000, I STRONGLY BELIEVE THAT THOSE WHO DO NOT ATTEND HAVE EQUAL RIGHTS TO REPRESENTATION. IT IS OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT THOSE RIGHTS. FURTHER, WE MUST BASE OUR DECISIONS ON FACTS AND NOT EMOTIONS.

I BELIEVE WE HAVE COME A LONG WAY AS A COMMUNITY AND BELIEVE WE CAN DO EVEN MORE. IF WE ARE TRULY CONCERNED ABOUT

DOING A BETTER JOB AND SERVING THE NEEDS OF OUR CITY, THEN I BELIEVE THERE IS MORE THAT BRINGS US TOGETHER THAN DIVIDES US AS A GOVERNMENT.

A NUMBER OF YEARS AGO, I MADE A COMMITMENT TO THE PEOPLE OF THIS CITY TO WORK TIRELESSLY TO MAKE PEABODY A BETTER PLACE IN WHICH TO LIVE. THIS EVENING I RENEW THAT PLEDGE AND ASK THE CITY COUNCIL, PUBLIC OFFICIALS, AS WELL AS OTHERS THROUGHOUT THE COMMUNITY, FOR YOUR HELP, YOUR SUPPORT, YOUR GUIDANCE AND YOUR PRAYERS.

ON BEHALF OF MY WIFE, JACKIE, AND OUR FAMILY, I WANT TO WISH ALL OF OUR CITIZENS A VERY HAPPY, HEALTHY AND PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR. GOD BLESS YOU ALL.

